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ABSTRACT

This instructional handbook is one of a series of ten packets designed to form a comprehensive course in nutrition for secondary students. The focus of this booklet is on the dangers and fallacies of popular food fads and fad diets. It contains a page of teaching suggestions, a pre-test for the students, and factual nutrition information with examples of how this information can be used in daily living. A post-test and bibliography are included. (JD)

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NEW HORIZONS IN NUTRITION

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FOOD FADDISM

SP 016 758

NEW HORIZONS IN NUTRITION

AN ISSUE ORIENTED APPROACH

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PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

These ten instructional packets are designed to help you make the science of nutrition a fascinating, relevant topic of study for your students. The study of nutrition is the most basic of all skills as eating is something done by every student every day of his or her life. With the intrinsic relationship between proper nutrition and good health, it is vitally important that we help students to make intelligent decisions with regard to what they eat.

The ten packets which make up New Horizons in Nutrition can be taken together to form a comprehensive course in nutrition for secondary students. If you prefer, individual packets can be used when they're relevant to specific topics in health, home economics, science, or social studies classes. In addition, you can use the materials with entire classes or individual students can be given the packets for self-directed study.

Each packet contains a page of teaching suggestions which can easily be detached before the rest of the booklet is given to the students. The materials for the students include a pre-test, a selection which provides the students with factual information and examples of how this information can be utilized in everyday life, and a post test. Reading the selections and completing the evaluation devices is not enough to insure mastery of the concepts. We urge you to reinforce the packets by following through with related classroom activities. You'll find suggestions in the "Notes to the Teacher" or use them as a springboard to develop activities more ideally suited to the needs of your students. Finally, brief bibliographies are provided with each packet which lists related readings and audiovisual materials.

These suggested materials are not meant to be used as a research bibliography. Rather, they are sources of additional information which are likely to be of interest to secondary students.

The topics of the ten packets are:

1. *Advertising*
2. *Back to Basics*
3. *The Emotional Aspects of Nutrition*
4. *Food Faddism*
5. *Low Carbohydrate Diets*
6. *Nutrition and the Athlete*
7. *Nutrition: Yesterday, Today, and Tommorrow*
8. *Social Issues in Nutrition*
9. *Vegetarianism*
10. *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*

We sincerely hope these packets help you to make nutrition education an alive, relevant, and exciting topic of study for you and your students. The benefits for everyone are well worth your effort.

The Authors

TEACHING NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Food faddism abounds in contemporary society. It represents both economic waste and a serious threat to health. Yet, each year, new faddist claims appear, and young and old alike jump on the bandwagon to try the "latest" diet or food supplement. This packet considers why the attraction of food fads is so great, and debunks some of the more common myths.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will identify reasons why persons are likely to be attracted to food fads.
2. Students will consider some of the more common myths and be able to offer reasons why these claims are false.

ACTIVITIES

1. Collect questionable ads which promote "magic" diet or which make exaggerated claims. Critique these ads in class.
2. Draw up a list of 20-25 of the commonly held myths relative to foods and nutrition. Allow students to survey their fellow classmate (and maybe teachers) to determine how widespread is belief in these misconceptions.
3. Based on the results of the above survey, students can prepare a display for the cafeteria which identifies nutritional truths from fiction.

PRE TEST KEY

1.	F	6.	F
2.	T	7.	F
3.	F	8.	T
4	F	9.	T
5	T	10.	F

POST TEST KEY

1.	T	6.	F
2.	F	7.	F
3.	T	8.	Answers to items 8-10 may vary.
4.	F	9.	Refer to packet.
5.	T	10.	

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PRE TEST

1. _____ Food grown using organic fertilizer is superior to foods grown with chemical fertilizer.

2. _____ A diet low in protein does not promote the quick loss of excess inches of body fat.

3. _____ Some types of cancer can be cured by special diets.

4. _____ Our soil has been seriously depleted in nutrients, and therefore it is advisable to buy health foods.

5. _____ The "Mayo Diet" has no real association with the famous "Mayo" Clinic.

6. _____ Additives in food have no real value except to enhance flavor and color appeal.

7. _____ The Air Force diet is a carefully balanced plan of diet and exercise.

8. _____ It is not necessary to eat special or unusual foods to lose weight.

9. _____ All foods are organic.

10. _____ Food commonly found in the supermarket have had most of their nutritional value destroyed through processing.

FOOD FADDISM

Americans spend over a billion dollars a year on health foods. Fads, fallacies and quackery abound in this area. Why are so many Americans willing to invest their money in fraudulent remedies, devices and schemes? Why are they constantly taken in by the new or the latest fad? Most consumers are gullible. They do not want to think that a nutritional device can be a way for others to make money.

Food fads and quackery are not new. The information is so cleverly written that even professionals may need to study it carefully before all of the partial truths and misconceptions presented by implication can be sorted out from the facts. Health frauds will continue to exist as long as they are profitable, and as long as there are victims willing to fatten the bank account of quacks (a quack is a person pretending to possess special knowledge and skills for the express purpose of financial gains).

There are many other reasons why consumers fall prey to the different health schemes. Some do not trust the medical profession, or they may have a fear of the medical profession. The food quack plays on this fear and mistrust and uses it to his or her advantage. Another reason is the high cost of medical care. Compared to the amount that has to be paid for medical services, the cost of the food fallacy becomes inexpensive. Many consumers lack sufficient nutritional knowledge to make a sound judgement, so they can easily be led astray. Still others are willing to search for a cure on their own, and others hold false beliefs about health, disease and therapy.

Advertising plays a big role in this persuasion. A well known person is used to recommend a certain product, and people want to identify with this person. Snob appeal is also used. Everyone wants to feel that they are better than the next person, and this can be accomplished through the use of a certain product. Or the appeal may be based on image. This product will improve your standing in the community, people will look up to you. Some offer a reward. Try this product and you will get a bonus, or a free gift, or your money back, or stamps, etc. Still other ads present misrepresented scientific evidence to back up their claim. They usually quote from some unknown source, or they may claim that doctors have found this statement to be true. They do not name the doctors, and the source is usually not a reliable one.

More than 10 million Americans willingly support nutritional quackery each year. Nutritional quackery is undoubtedly the single most prevalent form of quackery in the U.S. today. With the vast

amount of money that is spent, it is easy to understand why promotors are anxious to "work" this area.

EXAMPLES OF CURRENT FADS

There are many types of food fads (a food faddist is one who follows certain food practices with great enthusiasm for a period of time, such as an enthusiast for yogurt and molasses). Some of the popular fads are: grape juice will cure cancer; raw potatoes are poisonous to children; "natural" foods are better for you; grapefruits can burn up the kilocalories and help you lose weight.

Food quackery presents at least three hazards:

1. ***the hazard to health***
2. ***the jeopardizing of good nutrition***
3. ***economic waste.***

Although the purchase of some of the supplements may be harmless, the cost in terms of value received is fantastic. The greatest harm comes to those who believe the claims that food supplements can cure cancer, diabetes, ulcers and other organic diseases.

There are primarily four myths upon which nutritional quackery is based:

1) ***All diseases are due to faulty diet.*** It is implied that it is almost impossible to get an adequate diet without using a food supplement. Advertisers of these products may actually claim to cure specific diseases.

2) ***Malnutrition is caused by soil depletion; chemical fertilizers are useless or poisonous.*** The facts are that the genetic make-up of the seed rather than the soil composition affects the nutritive value of foods.

3) ***Foods are overprocessed and much of the nutritive value of foods has been lost.*** The facts are that processing may result in some loses, but the claims are overly exaggerated.

4) ***Subclinical deficiencies are common; aches, pains and fatigue are due to a faulty diet.*** Many complications may lead to these symptons. Only qualified physicians can diagnose nutritional deficiencies.

Following are some of the "Claims" made by health quacks:

a) Our soil has lost its vitamins and minerals; thus our food crops have little nutritional value.

b) Chemical fertilizers are poisoning our soil.

c) Natural, organic fertilizers not only are safer than chemical fertilizers, but they also produce healthier crops.

d) Modern processing removes most vitamins and minerals from foods.

e) If you have an ache or pain or are just feeling tired, you are probably suffering from a vitamin deficiency.

f) If you want to lose weight, you have to eat special foods.

g) Vitamins from natural sources are much better than synthetic vitamins.

h) Everyone should take vitamins, just to be sure.

All of these claims are false. But through advertising, promotional campaigns, and so forth, many Americans believe these claims; and thus they are wasting their money on "natural" foods and supplements. They are the victims of nutritional quackery.

FAD DIETS

Approximately one out of every five Americans over 30 years of age is overweight. Nearly all of them have tried to lose weight by following popular fad diets. These diets have one thing in common that attracts weight-conscious people: the diets promise a swift, easy, painless method of weight reduction. These diets often work, in that weight loss is achieved. However, the loss is very seldom permanent. The diets do not provide directions for maintaining initial weight loss through good eating habits. Within a few months the weight is usually regained because old eating habits are resumed.

Fad diets may be dangerous to your health, especially if they are followed for a long period of time. Nutritionists and dietitians agree that there is only one effective way to take off pounds and keep them off. And that is to follow the basic rules of good nutrition and to count the kilocalories. The dieter must learn that a change in food habits is essential not only for weight loss, but to maintain desirable weight throughout life.

HIGH PROTEIN, LOW CARBOHYDRATE DIET

The most common type of fad diet is the high-protein, low carbohydrate diet. Initial weight loss on these high protein diets is due to water loss. There are medical objections to such a diet, especially if it is followed for a long period of time. The extra protein places a strain on the kidneys, because the waste products of proteins are excreted by the kidneys. Also, a diet low in carbohydrate can lead to ketosis, which means the fats are not utilized correctly because of an insufficient amount of carbohydrate.

This low carbohydrate, high protein diet appears under many different names:

The Doctor's Quick Weight-Loss Diet, by Dr. Irwin Stillman. The diet consists of lean meats, poultry, seafood, eggs, skim milk, cheese in any quantities, and eight glasses of water daily.

The Calories Don't Count Diet, by Dr. Herman Taller, an obstetrician. This diet features unlimited amount of bacon, sasuage, poultry and fish. Vegetables and the aforementioned contain only minute amounts of digestible carbonydrates. Dr. Taller was convicted of mail fraud and violation of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

The Mayo Diet, which is not connected with the famous Mayo Clinic. This diet offers a combination of eggs, grapefruit and meat, with a few fruits and vegetables.

The Air Force Diet, which has no connection with the U.S. Air Force. This diet suggests 60 gram carbohydrate per day and uses unlimited amounts of meat, eggs, poultry and cheese.

THE HIGH CARBOHYDRATE, LOW PROTEIN DIET

This diet could result in nutritional imbalance. Protein is restricted to 20 gram/day, which means there is an insufficient amount for building and repairing body tissue. When this happens, the body uses its lean muscles and tissues as a supplementary source of protein. Some of these diets are:

Dr. Stillman's Doctor's Quick Inches Off Diet. The diet is high in carbohydrate and low in protein and fat. The diet is guaranteed to take off inches, not pounds.

The Zen Macrobiotic Diet, consists primarily of fruits, vegetables and brown rice.

OTHER DIETS

Starvation Diets, These diets should not be followed on your own. A person should be under a physician's care during the fasting period.

The Low-Fat or Fat Free Diet, Fat in any form is eliminated.

The Buttermilk Only Diet, This consists of 6 glasses of buttermilk, one glass every 3 hours.

The Meat Only Diet, This diet consists of a half-pound of meat three times a day.

OTHER DEVICES

Reducing salons, wonder diets and pills probably lead the list of fake cures for those who dream of having ugly fat melt away without the effort and strain of self-denial. "Fat Clinics" use a variety of methods to try and help people lose weight. One such method involves the use of a hormone called HCG (Human Chorionic Gonadotropin). The safety and effectiveness of HCG for obesity has not been established, and there is no evidence that the drug is useful in the treatment of obesity. The Food

and Drug Administration requires that a statement to this effect should be on the label, and it also insists that the information should be used in advertising campaigns.

HEALTH AND ORGANIC FOODS

The popularity of "health" and "organic" foods should not be underestimated. These foods are now increasing in popularity with college students because they equate these foods with ecology. Consumers generally expect that these foods are processed without pesticides and artificial fertilizers and are free of hormones antibiotics and preservatives.

In 1971, a hearing on "health" foods was held by the Department of Consumer Affairs in New York. At that time, Dr. Frederick Stare offered the following definitions of pertinent terms:

1) No single food should be identified as "organic" because all foods are organic;

2) No single food should be termed as a "health" food because edible foods properly used in a balanced diet are conducive to good health; and

3) The term "natural food" should be prohibited because all foods are natural or are manufactured from natural foods.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BESIDES PRICE ????

The Zen Macrobiotic diet represents an extreme examole of a general trend toward natural and organic foods. Cases of anemia, hypocalcemia (low blood level of calcium), scurvy, emaciation due to starvation, and other forms of malnutrition, in addition to kidney disorders due to restricted fluid intakes, have been reported by followers of this diet. In some cases, this diet was fatal.

FOOD ADDITIVES

Most consumers do not understand food additives. The very word "chemical" and "synthetic" arouse fear in them. But the use of additives is not new. Salt is our oldest known preservative. It was first used by man when he learned that salt would preserve meat without cooking. Food additives are substances added directly to foods or substances which become components of food through surface

contact. As our knowledge of perservation has increased, so has our use of additives.

A substance newly proposed for addition to food must undergo strict testing to establish its safety as an additive. Information must be presented to the FDA as to the identify of the additive, its chemical composition, how it is manufactured, and the analytical methods to be used to detect and measure its presence in the food supply at the levels of expected use. Finally, data must be provided establishing that the additive is safe for its intended use.

Food additives are used to:

1) ***Enhance flavor - spices and flavorings are examples of this.***

2) ***Stabilize and thicken - starch, pectin, gelatin, etc. are used for this purpose.***

3) ***Neutralize or alter acidity or alkalinity - baked goods, soft drinks and confectionary require this process.***

4) ***Prevent oxidation and spoilage - salt, vinegar, heat, freezing, smoking and spices are used for this purpose.***

Some additives could be eliminated if the housewife were willing to grow her own food, harvest and grind it, and spend long hours cooking and canning. Most people today are not willing to accept these inconveniences. So, additives are necessary.

SOURCES OF NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is the federal agency responsible for enforcing laws to protect consumers of food, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices, chemical products, and other articles used in the home. Congress enacts the laws and relies on the FDA to enforce them.

On January 13, 1973, the FDA ordered that food labels list the kilocalories, fats, proteins, carbohydrate and related nutrients in each serving of food. These rules are intended to prevent consumer deception and to promote good nutrition.

Since 1975, all fortified foods, and all foods for which a nutrition claim is made, must display nutrition information on the labels. The FDA has published a pamphlet entitled "We Want You to Know About Nutrition Labels on Food." This pamphlet outlines the basic requirements concerning labeling.

SUMMARY

There are many food fads and fallacies surrounding us. Learn to listen, and to read carefully and to

evaluate all information that is presented to you. If you are in doubt, write to the FDA; consult the local Dietetic Association; the Public Health Nutritionist; or the college faculties in Food and Nutrition. Think twice before you follow the latest fat!

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

Below are some food myths which many people believe. If a friend or member of your family held such a belief, briefly describe how you would provide them with correct information. (Use additional reference materials when necessary).

1. Feeling tired or "run down" can usually be cured by taking a vitamin supplement.

2. The best way to lose weight is to eat only those foods which are high in protein.

3. The soil in the U.S. has been depleted of nutritional value by chemical fertilizers. Therefore it is better to buy organically grown foods.

4. The best source of nutrition information is pamphlets and books in a health food store.

5. Most diseases are caused by poor diet.

POST TEST

1. _____ Almost everyone is susceptible to food faddism.

2. _____ The FTC is the federal agency most responsible for the safety of the food we eat.

3. _____ Food additives have many useful purposes.

4. _____ Health foods are better for us because they have been grown with organic fertilizers.

5. _____ High protein weight loss diets can cause kidney problems for some people.

6. _____ Occasionally it is a good idea to fast from eating all foods to purify one's body.

7. _____ Food processing destroys all the nutritional value of most foods we eat.

List three reasons why people are attracted to food fads.

8.

9.

10.